UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/AC.51/1996/L.8/Add.1
5 September 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-sixth session (Part II)
26 August-6 September 1996

DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

1. At its 36th and 37th meetings, on 26 and 28 August 1996, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General (A/51/6 (Note)).

Discussion

2. Many delegations welcomed the note and were of the view that it should be included as an integral part of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. They noted that the format of the note followed the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-fourth session, namely sections dealing with persistent problems, emerging trends, challenges, the role of the Organization, and directions to be pursued and priorities. They welcomed the fact that the text was based largely on agreements reached by intergovernmental bodies, including General Assembly resolution 50/6 of 24 October 1995 entitled the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, and texts agreed by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development.

3. One delegation stated that the Declaration, as a consensus resolution rather than a signed intergovernmental agreement, should not serve as a basis for the note.

4. Other delegations referred to the present status of discussions on the Agenda for Development where agreement had been reached on individual segments, conditioned by an eventual overall agreement on the Agenda as a whole. Some delegations underlined that the Working Group texts were still at the proposal stage, had not been endorsed by the competent intergovernmental bodies and therefore could not constitute a basis for the medium-term plan.

5. Many delegations welcomed the positive response made by the Secretariat to the concerns that had been expressed by some delegations at the first part of the Committee's session. They considered that the note was balanced, particularly in terms of the attention given to development issues. Many delegations considered the note to be a good basis for reaching consensus, subject to further refinements.

6. Other delegations stated that the note did not reflect the medium-term plan and was therefore unsuited to provide an overview of that plan, especially as it gave particular emphasis to development issues to the detriment of other programmes and issues.

7. Some delegations expressed the view that the note was not balanced, was too long and too general. They were of the view that the language of the note did not accurately reflect consensus reached at the major United Nations conferences or approved by other intergovernmental bodies. They were of the view that the note could not replace the Perspective that was considered at the first part of the Committee's current session. They underlined that there was no consensus on any recommendation to delete the Perspective from the proposed medium-term plan.

8. Many delegations stressed that the end of the cold war had removed many of the previous constraints on the functioning of the Organization, not only on its political role. In discussing the role of the Organization, some delegations felt that the principles of the Charter must be fully respected and were of the view that the Organization must refrain from intervening in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

9. Referring to paragraph 24 of the note, some delegations pointed out that the acceptance of the Secretary-General's good offices depended on the consent of the States concerned and no departure from that principle was acceptable. Other delegations stressed the importance of safeguarding the Secretary-General's freedom of action under the Charter, particularly in the field of maintenance of international peace and security.

10. Some delegations underlined the importance of continued reaffirmation of the inalienable right of self-determination of all peoples, taking into account the particular situation of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation and recognition of the right of peoples to take legitimate action in accordance with the Charter to realize their inalienable right of self-determination. Some delegations stated that the exercise of the right of self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action that would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.

11. Some delegations rejected the linkage made between democratization and the establishment of a multi-party system.

12. Some delegations expressed the view that the problems of countries with economies in transition were not adequately reflected. Several delegations expressed the view that the note should address more fully the question of disarmament, organized crime, illicit trade of arms and drugs, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and landmines.

13. One delegation expressed the view that as globalization and interdependence in the world economy continued to grow, an historic opportunity had arisen for constructive dialogue for the promotion of international cooperation for development, based on the imperatives of mutual interests and benefits, shared responsibilities and genuine interdependence. Therefore, the much-lauded spirit of partnership should be further strengthened and more broadly embraced when such a dialogue was held in the General Assembly. That delegation also underlined the important role of regional economic groupings as a catalyst for global economic growth and expansion of trade.

14. Many delegations stressed that the priorities proposed by the Secretary-General were of equal status and that the listing did not mean any specific order of priority. Some delegations were of the view that disarmament issues should be included among the priorities. Other delegations stated their general agreement with the priorities listed.

15. One delegation stressed that global issues such as population, AIDS, drugs, crime, environment and mine clearance should also be included among the priorities.

16. Some delegations expressed the view that the adoption of an introduction to the medium-term plan outlining the priorities of the United Nations was a prerequisite to the adoption of the plan.

17. Many delegations expressed the view that the note should also stress that Member States must meet their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions.

Conclusions and recommendations

18. The Committee recalled General Assembly decision 50/452 of 22 December 1995, by which the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the medium-term plan on the basis of recommendations of the Committee at its thirty-fourth session and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and taking into account views expressed by Member States in the Fifth Committee. The Committee welcomed the strict observance in document A/51/6 (Note) of the format that it had recommended at its thirty-fourth session, namely sections dealing with persistent problems, emerging trends, challenges, the role of the Organization, and directions to be pursued and priorities.

19. The Committee took note of document A/51/6 (Note), which was submitted by the Secretary-General to be considered for inclusion in the medium-term plan in response to the request made by the Committee as stated in paragraph 48 of its report on the first part of its current session (A/51/16 (Part I)), and recommended that the General Assembly, in considering the document, pay due attention to the observations expressed in paragraphs ___ to ___ of the report of the Committee on the second part of its thirty-sixth session.